



I D C V E N D O R S P O T L I G H T

Leveraging Remote Monitoring and Management Services for Printer Fleets in the Cloud

January 2012

Adapted from *Worldwide and U.S. Outsourced Print and Document Services 2010–2014 Forecast and Analysis* by Michael Orasin and Angèle Boyd, IDC #224913

Sponsored by Endeavor Services Group

The cloud, the Internet, and the increased reliance on tablets, smartphones, and mobile devices in the workplace are changing how the workforce uses and prints content and also increasing the number of pages being printed. Because these technologies frequently bypass the PC, workers require remote access to hardcopy devices via the network or cloud. This puts a greater burden on the IT department to ensure it can respond quickly to the remote worker's needs — particularly when a printer, copier, etc., is running low on supplies or experiencing problems. Organizations are responding to their mobile or cloud-based workforce's frustrations, complaints, and requirements by exploring monitoring and management solutions that can help them handle their remote hardcopy devices more adeptly without additionally burdening their IT staff or hiring additional support people. This Vendor Spotlight examines the drivers of a renewed interest in remote hardcopy device monitoring and management solutions and explains the advantages of having this support provided as a service. It also looks at the role that technology services company Endeavor Services Group plays in this strategically important market.

The Increasing Need to Manage and Maintain Distributed Hardcopy Devices

In 2009 and 2010, the sluggishness of the economic recovery, recession-driven cost cutting by businesses, increased use of digital workflows, and emerging environmental initiatives led IDC to forecast that the annual page volume on hardcopy equipment would be relatively flat to slightly declining in 2011. However, several recent developments are reversing this downward trend in page counts. More recent IDC research shows that certain verticals, departments, and brands have experienced greater increases in page volume over the past year than others. Increases in hardcopy device shipments have also produced a rise in overall page volume.

It now appears that technologies such as the cloud, the Internet, and mobile devices are playing a major role in changing how businesses use, store, and, ultimately, print content. Because printing devices increasingly offer direct Web connection or are accessible via the cloud, the dynamics of bypassing the PC, but still producing pages, offers a new source for printed material as well as a new venue for incremental printing.

Even though more employees are using notebooks, smartphones, and tablets to work remotely, they are still required to maintain business processes as if they were in the office. To support this growing transformation to a mobile workforce, businesses are deploying solutions that will enable remote access to business-critical information and processes and give their workers the ability to produce hardcopy on remote networked devices.



Managed print services (MPS) are well suited to meeting many of the needs of a mobile workforce. Consequently, IDC anticipates that more cloud-based printing solutions will appear in the market and forecasts that worldwide mobile printing revenue will grow from \$68.3 million in 2010 to \$1.0 billion in 2015.

On the other hand, the establishment of cloud-based printing infrastructures or more centralized fleets of hardcopy devices has also created a new class of problems, unpleasant surprises, and an endless source of user frustrations. Users without direct access to hardcopy devices have to worry about whether or not critical or rush print jobs will suffer adversely from one or more of the following situations:

- Shortages of supplies (e.g., enough paper, toner/ink quality to complete the job)
- Unacceptable print quality due to low toner/ink or printer malfunctions
- Unscheduled maintenance taking the device offline when it is most needed
- Not knowing if the hardcopy device failed to print

Therefore, it's becoming increasingly important for organizations in the cloud and those supporting large mobile workforces to find cost-effective and efficient solutions to better support workers who remotely access shared printers, faxes, copiers, etc.

Benefits of Print Management and Monitoring Services

Print management and monitoring services enable organizations to have fully optimized, managed, and supported print and copy capabilities. This frees the organization's IT department from the responsibility of maintaining, updating, and configuring all devices. The provider is responsible for monitoring the hardcopy device network and responding whenever any of the devices needs service to eliminate downtime.

These types of services also yield one or more of the following additional benefits to organizations:

- Track and maintain an accurate inventory of print devices
- Control and manage access to hardcopy devices to maximize their investments in hardware and control hardware and support costs
- Ensure that only the people who need advanced capabilities for their job (e.g., high speed, photo quality color) are given access to those devices
- Monitor the hardcopy device arrays and automatically respond whenever a device is jammed, low on toner, or in need of service (Organizations can also identify and respond to problems.)
- Track workloads and user preferences to identify which devices consistently cause the most problems (e.g., paper jams, repairs) (Companies can use the information to replace overutilized or underutilized devices with those more suited to the way they are being used.)
- Reduce redundant supplies and overall operating expenses by managing the systems, providing updates as required, and improving reliability, security, availability, and scalability
- Eliminate customization and software integration issues

Key Trends in Managed Print Services

With increasing cloud deployments, providers of managed print services will continue to broaden their offerings as the market opportunity expands to include basic print services as well as managed print/document services. Customers should consider providers that have such forward-looking products. IDC also expects to see the emergence of business process optimization services to help organizations that require monitoring capability of their devices or need better management of print challenges for document-intensive business processes.

Related to this development, IDC expects user-to-device ratios to increase in distributed office environments. As MPS becomes more prevalent and as customers increasingly realize that personal hardcopy devices aren't as cost-effective as shared devices, IDC believes that shared print resources will displace many personal hardcopy devices that currently enjoy a 1:1 relationship with the PC.

The hardcopy market is continuing to move in a transformative direction that began in the recession. Most of what we predict follows the course of a changing market that will continue to rely on achieving operational savings by reducing costs in the IT environment.

Considering Endeavor Services Group

Endeavor Services Group offers a range of tools and services designed to reduce IT hardware- and software-related operating costs. The company's mission is to help its customers improve IT services while lowering costs immediately. Endeavor's Flex-brand work teams integrate people, processes, tools, and depot capabilities to deliver high-value, lower-cost offerings.

Formed in 2001, Endeavor Services Group has been helping a wide variety of businesses reduce IT-related costs. Endeavor has experience in implementing, supporting, and replacing imaging devices, servers, storage, and operating systems. Using advanced cloud-based tools and technologies, Endeavor enables its customers to handle disparate global print management needs.

For example, Endeavor identifies problems and responds to issues by utilizing its FlexDesk tool suite, which integrates monitoring, inventory management, triage, ticket management, and logistics — reducing and often eliminating unnecessary downtime. The combined effort of people, processes, and tools identifies which devices are most troublesome and improves performance.

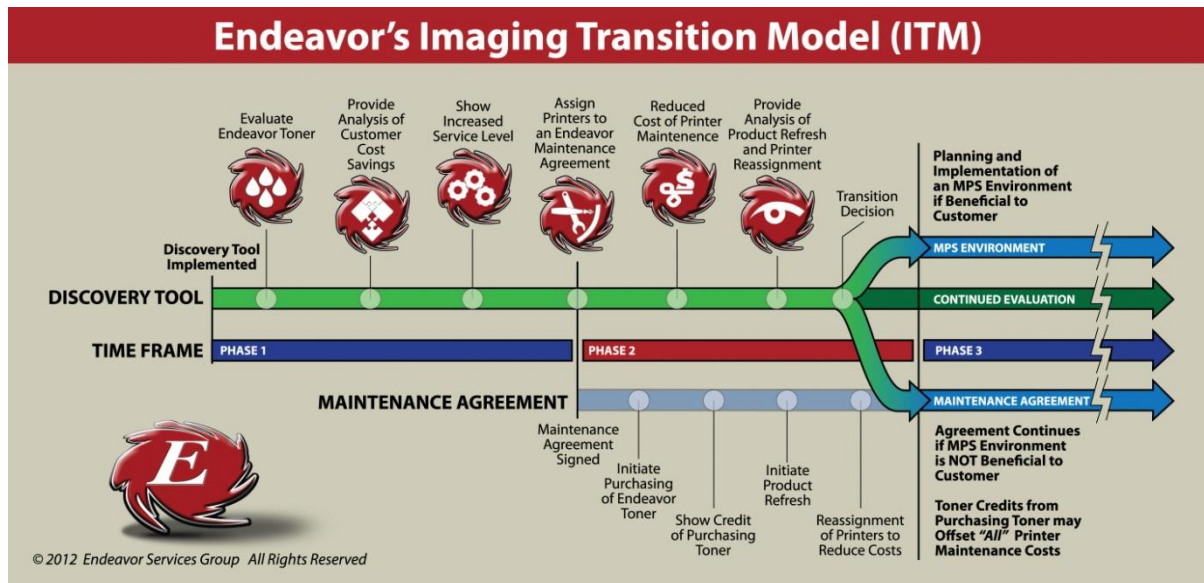
Endeavor Services Group addresses the following areas with its Web-based managed print solutions:

- Stocking consumables, including toner and PM kits
- Printer jams and repairs
- Proper device utilization
- Reducing downtime and increasing productivity
- Inventory management and tracking

The company's Imaging Transition Model (ITM) is designed to help customers decide whether a managed print solution, price per page/device, or a conventional maintenance agreement is most cost-effective (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Endeavor's Imaging Transition Model



Source: Endeavor Services Group, 2012

Challenges

While Endeavor's services fit a growing need for support of print environments, IDC sees these environments becoming more complex. With mobile and remote users who have a requirement for secure available hardcopy print, enterprises will be looking at myriad solutions that are emerging in the market space. Business units, IT departments, and finance will need to come together to make decisions on how to best solve their hardcopy printer needs.

As business environments grow, the difficulties in supporting these disparate print environments will also continue to grow. Customers will deploy additional software functionality, security will continue to change, and integration with both external and internal or private clouds will need to expand. All these changes will need a comprehensive and high level of support. Endeavor needs to continue investing in people, tools, and processes that can keep up with the technology.

Conclusion

Organizations require their printing and copying infrastructure to be available, accessible, reliable, and tailored to suit their needs, budgets, and output requirements. They also want their solution to have a low cost of ownership and match the quality of output to the needs of each department. Their goals for choosing monitoring and managing services over performing the monitoring and management of print arrays in-house are to reduce complexity and to simplify what is often an unmanageable, costly print network that ties up resources and reduces efficiency.

Print monitoring and management services can provide organizations with just-in-time delivery of supplies so they no longer have to stock everything in-house. Service providers can often manage different types and models of print device fleets within a single application. They can provide proactive service scheduling to eliminate unplanned or extended downtimes as well as valuable insight on the total cost of an organization's print operations.

IDC believes the MPS and device management and control markets will continue to grow in importance as cloud use increases. To the extent that Endeavor can address the challenges described in this paper, the company has a significant opportunity for success.

A B O U T T H I S P U B L I C A T I O N

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